

CATHOLIC THEATRE

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WHICH IS THE OPPOSITE OF PROSE?

By A. L. Pattisson

(Reprinted, with permission, from DRAMA,
published in England)

What is the opposite of verse? Prose. What is the opposite of poetry? Prose. Does this make poetry and verse synonymous? Let us consider.

Each fresh work presented to us by a theatre poet of our day raises a babel of dispute. Discussion group, critic, apologist, journalist, lecturer, man in the queue, all fall to asking or expounding exactly why verse (or poetry) is a better medium for the playwright than prose; or alternatively, exactly why prose would have been as good a medium as poetry (or verse).

Now the curious thing about most of this discussion is that in it the words "verse" and "poetry" appear to be completely interchangeable. "Why does he have to write it in verse?" someone will demand. "Surely a chap can ask for his gin just as well in prose?" To which, as likely as not, some knowledgeable fellow will reply, "Because the language of verse is so much more concise. Poetry can speak on two or three levels at once — factual, spiritual, emotional and so on, and so on." This usually silences the diffident questioner who knows he isn't much good at chopping this kind of logic; yet how easily he might have turned the tables on the knowledgeable fellow had he simply asked "Why did you suddenly shift the ground of discussion by speaking in one sentence of 'verse' and in the next of 'poetry,' as though the two words referred to one and the same thing?"

The poets themselves have contributed to the confusion by tending to write of "poetry in the theatre" and of "verse in the theatre" as though these were inseparable. It is high time they were made separate, even if in the end they may have to be stuck together again.

Poetry, we have been told, carries overtones and undertones of meaning above and below its plain grammatical sense; poetry is a sort of transcendental pun; it is language in depth, language at its most intense; which makes it peculiarly fitted for drama, which is life at its most intense.

(Continued on page eleven)

ST. GENESIUS MEDAL

After several years of discussing the pro and con, trying to agree on style, type, price and design, the Conference is finally to have its own medal. As far as 10 years ago, members were asking for a special medal that would identify us throughout the country as a national organization. Appropriately, it seems, the medal will make its debut at the Convention in June.

In answer to our appeal early in the year, a number of designs were submitted. Some were studied over and over, others eliminated, and some worked over a second and a third time. Each seemed to have some necessary or interesting feature. Few had all. Our ideas as to how St. Genesius should look are numerous and varied it seems. The final choice, however, went to the St. Genesius sketch that has been used for the past 2 years on the Chicago Drama Festival program. It was designed by the art department of Immaculata High School (Chicago). The medal is about the size of a quarter. Its lines are clear and strong, the head of St. Genesius as shown emphasizes character and nobility. The head is shown in profile and is crowned with a laurel wreath which signifies victory. On the reverse side is a spray of laurel with CATHOLIC THEATRE CONFERENCE engraved thereon.

Medals will be made up on order. Samples in gold-filled and sterling silver will be on display at the Convention. Prices are as follows:

Sterling Silver\$ 1.50

Double Gold Filled ... 2.50

Solid Gold 15.00

(These prices include mailing charges)

If you are attending the Convention, you can place your order there. Otherwise, you may order by merely sending in request designating the type of medal and the number desired. The medals will be sent within thirty days after the Convention.

It is our hope that this medal will bring increased devotion and prayer to Saint Genesius and that it will be worn with pride. Let others know that we are one. The medal is one means by which that oneness can be made manifest to others.

NOMINEES FOR NEW TERM — 1955 - 1957

The Nominating Committee, Anna Helen Reuter, (Chicago), Chairman; Joseph Rice, (Los Angeles, Calif.); Sister Margaret Mary, F.S.P.A., (Ashland, Wisc.), herewith submits for your consideration the names of eight candidates for election to the Executive Board. In selecting its slate the Committee considered the needs of representation from all sections of the country and from all fields of theatre as well as factors of administrative ability, past contributions to the work of the Conference and future value to the Conference.

Sister Hyacinth, S.S.N.D.
Mount Mary College
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Sister M. Xavier, B.V.M.
Clarke College
Dubuque, Iowa

Brother Dunstan, C.S.C.
Notre Dame High School
Sherman Oaks, California

Reverend Robert Johnston, S.J.
St. Louis University
St. Louis, Missouri

Sister M. Angelita, B.V.M.
Immaculate Conception Academy
Davenport, Iowa

Sister M. Theodata, F.S.P.A.
Aquinas High School
LaCrosse, Wisconsin

Sister M. Marguerite, R.S.M.
Mercy College
Detroit, Michigan

Helen Coyle
Mary Manse College
Toledo, Ohio

ORDER III (ORDERS UNDER THE CONSTITUTION) Elections

Section 2: Eight members of the Executive Board shall serve a term of two years in virtue of one election, but he who shall be President, upon expiration of this term and without further election, shall serve the following term as member of the Board.

Section 3: The Executive Board, at a first meeting immediately after its election, shall elect from its members, a President, a Vice-President, and a Secretary-Treasurer, who shall hold office until their successors are elected.

BY-LAW IV — Nominations

The members in Convention assembled may nominate from the floor not more than eight additional candidates.

RULES II (RULES OF ORDER) Proxies

Any person qualified to hold a seat or cast a vote at any meeting of the Conference shall be allowed to sit or vote by proxy provided that such proxy shall be in writing, signed, and filed with the chairman at the meeting for which it is intended.

NEW CTC MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

The new directory of membership has been prepared and will be placed in the mail in mid-May. This directory carries the list of active members for the year 1954 - 55 and the Constitution and By-Laws of the Conference.

The publishing of the Constitution has been at considerable expense and trouble but we believe you will appreciate and use this opportunity to study the framework and government of your Conference. It is only through intelligent and careful study of these rules and regulations that we can hope for understanding of the needs and goals of CTC and consequent good judgment in future action.

If you do not receive your copy, please notify the secretarial office. It's difficult to track down errors or losses when a member writes months later to state that a piece of literature was not received. Whatever the reason, it's disappointing to learn that while we thought you were being satisfactorily serviced, you were not receiving literature. Please cooperate and let your secretarial office know at once when things go amiss. We're sincerely grateful for those letters that tell us what is wrong and when. They give us the opportunity to correct and improve.

LIBRARY ADDITIONS

Two new scripts have been placed in the CTC library. One is a play in three acts entitled *THE MAN FROM ROCCA SICCA*. It was written and presented by the faculty and students of Mount de Chantal, Visitation Academy (Wheeling, West Virginia). It was adapted from the book of the same title by Reverend Reginald M. Coffey, O.P. with permission of the Bruce Publishing Co.

The second script is *THE HANDMAID* written by Sister Agnes deSales of Mount de Chantal Academy (Wheeling, West Virginia). The play treats of the meeting of Mary with Joseph. The psalms are recited at intervals during the play.

The HISTORY OF CATHOLIC THEATRE, a

thesis prepared by Sister Joseph Leona of York High School (York, Pennsylvania) has been placed in the CTC library. We are grateful to Sister for having placed this extensive and detailed work at the disposal of CTC members. We feel certain many will read it with interest. We hope that it will bring about renewed effort and interest in all who do.

CONVENTION PROGRAM NEWS

Just to bring you up to date on some additions to our Convention program: The panel on ART AND MORALITY OF THE THEATRE will be chaired by the Reverend R. F. Grady, S.J. of University of Scranton. Participants are Reverend Gabriel Stapleton, S.D.S., Mother of the Saviour Seminary, Blackwood, New Jersey, Reverend Norman Weyand, S.J. of Loyola University (Chicago) and Sister M. Gregory, O.P. Rosary College (River Forest, Ill.).

An arena production of Christopher Fry's THE LADY'S NOT FOR BURNING will be substituted by St. Mary College (Winona, Minnesota) for THE STRONG ARE LONELY originally scheduled on the Convention program.

The panel on BACKGROUND MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS will be chaired by Sister Mary Philip, C.S.C. of St. Mary of the Wasatch College (Utah).

Miss Rita Criste of Children's Theatre of Northwestern University (Evanston, Illinois) will conduct the CHILDREN'S THEATRE DEMONSTRATION IN CREATIVE DRAMATICS scheduled for nine o'clock Tuesday morning.

Mr. James R. Taylor, head of department of Radio the Critique on DRAMA FILMS.

Among those participating in discussion of THE CRUCIBLE will be Reverend Frederick A. Gallagher, S.J. of Holy Cross College (Worcester, Mass.).

Miss Mabel Frey of St. Catherine's College (St. Paul, Minnesota) will participate in the discussion following HOTEL UNIVERSE.

Following the presentation of the high school plays there will be a panel discussion which will be led by Sister Xavier Marie of College of Mt. St. Joseph-on-the-Ohio. Others who will take part are: Sister Mary Carlos, R.S.M. Mother of Mercy High School (Cincinnati, Ohio); Sister M. Jeanette, O.S.B. Mount Marty College (Yankton, South Dakota) Mr. Doug Brinkman of Mount Angel Seminary (St. Benedict, Oregon) and Mrs. L. Bujarski, Sacred Heart College (Wichita, Kansas).

To the members of the panel on ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANIZATION OF A DRAMA DEPARTMENT, is added the name of Sister Mary Seraphim, of Girls Central High School, Butte, Montana. at DePaul University (Chicago) and formerly director of Michiana Shores Theatre (Indiana) will participate on the panel on EDUCATIONAL TV.

Rev. James J. Donahue (Loras College, Dubuque) will be a panelist in the discussion of DRAMATIC CRITICISM AND WRITING.

Mr. Jerry Lynn, well known as an entertainer in Radio and TV will discuss and demonstrate entertaining techniques.

Sister Elizabeth Seton, O.P. College of St. Mary of the Springs, (Columbus, Ohio) will be one of the participants in the discussion following the premiere of THE BILLION DOLLAR SAINT.

Mr. William Elsen, Notre Dame University, will lead the discussion on THE BILLION DOLLAR SAINT, and Sister Margaret Mary, F.S.P.A., who was originally scheduled on this part of the program, will, instead, lead discussion on THE CRUCIBLE.

The name of Sister Matilda Mary, Holy Names College (Spokane, Washington) has been added to

FRIENDSHIP GARDENS

For those who are driving or taking the bus to Notre Dame for the Convention may we suggest a stop that will give vacation-pleasure to the trip? The stop is just outside Michigan City, Indiana at what is known as INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP GARDENS. The enterprise, begun in 1934, is dedicated to a warmer friendship between the people of all nations. Acres of land have been set aside with each country of the world represented in an unusual floral arrangement furnished by that country. The Persian rose garden, the Dutch tulip garden, the Chinese section with its tiny bridges and brooks — these and all the others combine to give one an hour or two of relaxation in a beautiful and unique setting that should be a "must" on the trip. An open-air island theatre is another feature of the gardens, it's background furnished by lush natural foliage.

Many of those who have sent in registrations have already made arrangements to see Friendship Gardens on their return trip from Notre Dame. There is an admission charge of \$1.00 which is slight cost for the pleasure and beauty provided.

Those coming to Chicago and changing to South Shore R.R. can also arrange to stop very conveniently to see the Gardens and then continue the trip from there.

Last month's article on LIGHTING by Stanley McCandless has brought several enthusiastic letters. For those who may be interested, CTC has a 17 page detailed paper on LIGHTING FOR THE AUDIENCE by Stanley McCandless which will be loaned on request. Send to the Secretarial office, not to the Library for the copy.

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Full Program of Speech and Theatre Courses
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Summer Session . . . June 20 - July 29
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Write:

Rev. R. A. Johnston, S.J.
Dept. of Speech
St. Louis University
St. Louis 8, Missouri

FESTIVAL NEWS

The Third Annual One-Act Play Festival for Catholic Colleges and Catholic Theatre Groups of Indiana was held on Saturday, March 26, at Marian College, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Participating groups and their plays were:

SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

St. Mary's College
Notre Dame, Indiana
Director: Natalie E. White

OUR TOWN

St. Joseph's College
Collegeville, Indiana
Student Director: James Plate

ARIA da CAPO

St. Mary-of-the-Woods College
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana
Director: Sister Mary Olive, S.P.

THE ROMANCERS

Marian College
Indianapolis, Indiana
Director: Sister Mary Jane

LUCIFER AT LARGE

Notre Dame University
Notre Dame, Indiana
Director: Fred W. Syburg

THE DOCTOR OF SPITE OF HIMSELF

Evansville Catholic Theatre Guild
Evansville, Indiana
Director: Al Goelzhauser

THE MAD WOMAN OF CHAILLOT

Indianapolis Catholic Theatre Guild
Indianapolis, Indiana
Director: Elizabeth Glaze

Judges who served were Reverend Robert Hartman of Holy Name Parish, (Indianapolis), Mrs. Dorothea Bertorelli of Junior Civic Theater and Jordan College, (Indianapolis), and Mr. James Eldridge, Drama Critic of the Indianapolis News.

* * *

In Spokane (Washington) the Sixth Annual Play Festival, sponsored by the North Pacific Region of CTC was again held at Holy Names College on March 18 and 19. Eight schools participated. Father Anthony Juliano is chairman of this region. Sister Matilda Mary, S.N.J.M. was Festival chairman. Mrs. Gordon Windle of Spokane, well known for her speech and drama work among high school students, served as critic-judge.

The program opened on May 18 with a general session presided over by Sister Marie Leon, F.S.P.A.

Plays that followed during the two days were:

THE BOND BETWEEN

Notre Dame Academy
Colton, Washington
Director: Sister Francis Marie, S.S.N.D.

EVENING DRESS INDISPENSABLE

Our Lady of Lourdes Academy
Wallace, Idaho
Director: Mrs. Herman Rossi

TOMORROW IS THE DAY

St. Joseph Academy
Sprague, Washington
Director: Sister M. Loyola, F.C.S.P.

DAVID COPPERFIELD, Act II

St. Gertrude Academy
Cottonwood, Idaho
Director: Sister Mary Imelda, O.S.B.

IDOLS

Marycliff High School
Spokane, Washington
Director: Sister Marie Logan, F.S.P.A.

A MAID GOES FORTH TO WAR

Holy Names Academy
Seattle, Washington
Director: Sister Janet Mary, S.N.J.M.

THE JEST OF HAHALABA

Gonzaga Preparatory School
Spokane, Washington
Director: Reverend Fred Reidy, S.J.

EVERYWOMAN

Holy Names Academy
Spokane, Washington
Director: Miss Lucille Lake

* * *

On April 30th a Festival for high schools of the Louisville, Kentucky area was held at Presentation Academy. Sister M. Andrea of the Academy was in charge of arrangements. Sister M. Agnese, S.P. (Providence High School, Clarksville, Indiana) served as Critic-Judge, along with Mrs. L. C. Gardner of Louisville. Fifteen high schools participated.

The Membership, Financial, and Secretarial Reports for the year 1954 - 1955 will appear in the mid-summer issue.

WHO? WHAT? WHERE?

1. Although not an actress who has played many thrilling roles?
2. Where can you read of the unbelievable timidity of the grand lady of the theatre?
3. Who played the role of Mary in Father Peyton's Radio and T.V. programs and recently starred in a T.V. drama?
4. What inspiring writer and producer emphasized Christian joyousness in all of his writings?
5. What Broadway playwright admitted that he was stimulated by the high caliber of some campus performances?
6. What is the Apple Blossom Festival?
7. What non-Catholic actress wrote the poem, "Nobody Told Me"?

Mary, most serenely fair,
Hear an unbeliever's prayer.
Nurtured in an austere creed,
Sweetest Lady, she has need
Of the solace of your grace;
See the tears that stain her face
As she kneels to beg your love —
You whom no one told her of.

ANSWERS

1. Jacqueline Cochran in her "Stars at Noon."
2. In Ethel Barrymore's autobiography in the "Ladies' Home Journal."
3. Ruth Hussey.
4. The late Father Daniel Lord, S.J.
5. Elmer Rice.
6. A festival of poetry, drama, serious and humorous prose to be held at Michigan State, May 25 - 27.
7. Cornelia Otis Skinner.

"FROM PAGE TO STAGE"

The Tenth Biennial
Convention

JUNE 13 - 14 - 15
NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY

You can't afford to miss it!

CONVENTION REGISTRATION

In response to several queries asking how to register for the Convention, you need only send in your registration and reservation fees to

Sister M. Xavier, B.V.M.
Chairman of Registrations
Clarke College
Dubuque, Iowa

This fee is \$10.00 for the director or any other member of the faculty of a school or group that holds regular (\$10.00 per year) membership.

The fee for non-members is \$12.00.

The fee for student-members of CTC (those who already hold \$1.50 student membership in the Conference) is \$8.00.

Room accommodations on the Campus are \$1.50 per night and this, too, is to be sent to Sister M. Xavier. If you prefer to stay at Morris Inn (which is also on the Campus) rates begin at \$6.00 per night. Room reservations for Morris Inn must be sent directly to the Inn.

For your convenience, you may use the enclosed form and place it in the mail. Many have written for additional literature to send on to non-members who are interested in the Convention. We have a large supply of programs and flyers and will be glad to send these, either to you for further distribution or direct to the persons you list for us. There are many non-members who would, we feel sure, be grateful for literature and information. This is your Convention. Advertise it!

CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____
Affiliation _____
Address _____

Convention Fee \$10.00 (Member) _____
\$12.00 (Non-Member) _____
\$ 8.00 (Student-Member) _____

Room: Notre Dame Residence Hall
Single — \$2.00 per night _____
Double — \$1.50 per night per person _____
Morris Inn
Private room with bath —
\$6.00 per night _____
Double, twin beds with bath —
\$8.00 per night _____
Triple, twin beds and rollaway and bath —
\$9.00 per night _____

ROOMS NOT AVAILABLE UNTIL
4 P.M. SUNDAY, JUNE 12.

Reservations for Morris Inn must be made direct to:

Morris Inn — Reservation Desk
Notre Dame University
Notre Dame, Indiana

All other reservations and convention fee to be sent to:

Sister M. Xavier, B.V.M., Registrar
Clarke College
Dubuque, Iowa

HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE

COMEDY IS SERIOUS BUSINESS TO THIS STAR

By Judy Ebert

The Immaculata, Chicago, Illinois

When I was asked by Anna Helen Reuter, my drama teacher, to interview Carol Channing, I could hardly believe my ears. To interview a famous, glamorous actress had always been one of my journalistic ambitions and now it was going to become a reality! I made arrangements with Miss Channing's theatrical agent to come down to the Schubert Theatre at five o'clock. Carol Hopkinson, a fellow journalist, planned to go with me.

When we arrived at the theatre, several of the cast from "Wonderful Town" were milling through the alley behind the Schubert. There stood an old watchman who directed us to the star's dressing room after we importantly announced we had an interview.

To arrive at Miss Channing's dressing room, we had to cross the stage. What a thrill it gave us as we gazed upon the rows and rows of empty seats wondering if someday they'd be filled as we were walking across. The night watchman then told us to descend a flight of rickety stairs and stop at the first door at our right.

We went down the stairs. We stopped in front of the first door to our right. Having seen too many movies depicting glamorous backstage life, we then turned and looked at each other. Was this the watchman's idea of a joke, directing us to the boiler room? Why, this couldn't be Carol Channing's dressing room! There wasn't even a star on the door!

After seeing no other door in the near vicinity, we timourously knocked and Miss Channing's maid peered out through a crack in the door. After announcing who we were, we heard a low, husky voice inviting us inside.

From the moment we were embraced by Miss Channing's winning smile, all traces of self-consciousness disappeared. I informed Miss Channing that this interview was primarily for young actors and actresses who would like to know about her own high school life.

In the small, windowless room, amid shoeboxes and stage make-up, she told us that she graduated from a public high school in San Francisco. Every time they'd have a school assembly, she'd provide the entertainment, putting on one-woman comedy shows. She did take-offs on everything, from mem-

bers of the faculty to modern dancing. The students loved it and soon it became a routine part of assembly. She never realized what wonderful experience it gave her until she had graduated. The tall actress therefore advises young people to seize all the opportunities high school affords for appearing before the public.

We further discovered that the gracious star is one comedienne who never had a yen for serious acting. As she explains, "Comedy is in itself a very serious business. It's all a matter of recognition. If an actor interprets a situation in a way that the audience thinks they would react to it, he'll get laughs."

Miss Channing will testify that show business is just as hard as it's cracked up to be. Hers is a story of perseverance and determination resulting in success. "It's not the breaks that count. You can't leave a stone unturned," the popular comedienne told us.

After leaving school, she had a difficult time breaking into show business. Discouraged after ten years of bit parts and understudying, Miss Channing took a job in a department store. It wasn't long, however, before she heard that auditions were being given for the revue, "Lend An Ear." Deciding to turn over one more "stone," she auditioned. This time, her delightful talent was not overlooked and she landed a starring role.

With a cast of hopeful unknowns, the show became a hit in Los Angeles and a sensation on Broadway. She adds, after having talked to many performers, that there is no set formula for success. Everyone has a different story.

Miss Channing feels that college training in drama should be considered by those lucky enough to afford it. She reasons that college dramatics gives a greater understanding and knowledge of the theatre and will later prove invaluable in such a highly competitive field.

As a final bit of advice to young hopefuls, she says that she would never try to swerve anyone from show business. "If they're really interested, nothing will make them give it up." She'll feel miserable for them, but never dissuade them, because they'll always have that urge inside to perform.

And with that sage advice in our notes, we thanked the gracious actress for an inspiring visit and floated out the stage door, away from the bright lights into the darkening alley, happy in meeting a truly great performer — one to whom show business is more than a career, it's a life and love.

CROSS-COUNTRY CIRCUIT

COLLEGE and UNIVERSITY

- Rosary College (River Forest, Illinois) presented **TIME OUT FOR GINGER** in the college auditorium on April 22 and 24.
- Columbine Players of St. Mary's College (Notre Dame, Indiana) will present **BOY WITH A CART** by Christopher Fry during May. The production is directed by Edward Gazero.
- The Annual Original Musical Comedy will be presented by Catholic University Theatre (Washington, D.C.) from May 6 til May 21. This closes their year's program.
- Oscar Wilde's **IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST** will be presented in-the-round by the Players of College of St. Catherine (St. Paul, Minnesota) on May 13 and 14. Mabel Frey is director.
- The Mount Masquers of Mount St. Mary's College (Los Angeles) presented George Kelly's **THE TORCH BEARERS** on April 29 and 30. The play was under the direction of Frank Hanley.
- Clarke College (Dubuque, Iowa) presented Richard Sheridan's **THE RIVALS** on May 1 and 2. Sister M. Xavier, B.V.M. is director of the Drama department.
- **THE GREAT BIG DOORSTEP**, comedy by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett was the final production of the year at Mundelein College (Chicago). It was presented on May 7 and 8 under the direction of Sister M. Jeanelle, B.V.M.
- Viterbo College (LaCrosse, Wisconsin) celebrated its Fourth Annual Fine Arts Week, May 5th to 12th with a series of evening and afternoon programs which featured original work in music, art and theatre by both the faculty and students.

A Verse drama of Peguy poetry with interpretive dance was presented by members of the Speech and Drama department.

Sister Margaret Mary, F.S.P.A. presented a talk on "The Destiny of Modern Theatre."

COMMUNITY THEATRE

- Catholic Youth Organization of the Archdiocese of New York is sponsoring a one-act play contest on Sunday, May 22. Lillian H. Mooney, consultant for girls' activities, is in charge of the program.

HIGH SCHOOL

- A famous Chinese love story **LUTE SONG** was presented by the Mercian Players (Milwaukee, Wisconsin) from May 1 through May 5 inclusive, under the direction of Miss Mercedes Ironside.

The play was done in complete Chinese Theatre style with "invisible" property men making changes in full view of the audience.

The Mercian Players feel that, as a result of "Lute Song," experience other than acting was acquired, as the Players made all their own costumes and, with the help of the Art department, painted all scenery.

- **STAG LINE**, a comedy in three acts by Anne Coulter Martens, was presented by the Masque and Gavel Players of Mother of Mercy High School (Cincinnati, Ohio) on April 23, 24 and 25. Boys from the nearby high school played the male roles. This delightful little play is a dramatization of the popular book by Graeme and Sarah Lorimer.

Junior and Senior dramatic art students who are candidates for the gold and the silver medals in this field will be presented in dramatic art recitals during April and May. In addition to a variety of solo readings, the following one-act plays will be given: **ALL ON A SUMMER'S DAY**, by Ryerson and Clements; **BETTY, BEHAVE** by Rose Campion, and **THREE TAPS ON A WALL** by Lindsay Barbee. Sister Mary Carlos, R.S.M. is director.

- The Genesian Masque Drama Club of the Academy of Notre Dame (Belleville, Illinois) presented **COUNTED AS MINE**, the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe for its annual play on April 15, 16 and 17 in the school auditorium.

- In May, Troubadours of St. Francis High School (Sacramento, California) will prepare for a one-act Play Festival in collaboration with eight other high schools in the district.

- Thirty students of St. Teresa Academy (East St. Louis, Illinois) attended the Regional CTC Convention held in St. Louis March 18 to 20. They gave enthusiastic reports at their next dramatic club meeting sharing their experiences with members of the club who were unable to attend.

SEEDS OF SUSPICION, a one-act mystery, was presented in the round by the Drama Class on April 26 as part of an initiation ceremony held in the evening. The cast included eight members of the class under the direction of Sister Mary Pius, Ad. P.P.S. assisted by two student directors.

Members of The Drama Workshop are directing a one-act play for an Assembly program and a portion of Father Nagle's **CATHERINE THE VALIANT** for a later occasion.

- In the recent Massachusetts Drama Festival, Archbishop Williams High School (Braintree, Massachusetts) presented BOX AND COX. PARADE AT THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE, to be presented for the CYO, and a Drama Festival at school will be a part of the Drama program before the year closes. Sister M. Gertrude is director.

- On May 9, Freshmen of Immaculate Conception Academy (Davenport, Iowa) presented an evening of one-acts. Director is Sister M. Angelita, B.V.M.

- As a finale to the year's program at Providence High School (Chicago) senior Drama students will assemble in the chapel for a solemn dedication of their talents to Catholic Action. This will be followed by a program of individual and choral readings and the awarding of pins and honors. Therese Marie Cuny is director.

- The Senior Drama Class of Academy of the Holy Angels (Minneapolis) presented John Maesfield's poetic drama END AND BEGINNING and Natalie White's farce SEVEN NUNS AT LAS VEGAS on April 22 and 24. Sister M. Charitas directed both productions.

CHILDREN'S THEATRE

- On May 6, 7 and 8 Children's Educational Theatre of Maryland presents THE PATCHWORK GIRL OF OZ. Dramatized from the story by L. Frank Baum, the play will be under the supervision of Frances Cary Bowen.

ANY UNWANTED BOOKS?

Reverend Bernard Haas, S.J. of St. Xavier High School, Jaipur City, Rajasthan, India, was generous with his time and effort when as Loyola Academy (Chicago) moderator, he helped in promotion and organization of the Chicago Drama Festival. Now he asks for some help that many of us could easily give. He asks that any books that you no longer want be sent on to him for use there in India. Kindergarten books, high school, grade school, college texts — any books that will pass the rules of good taste. Just wrap them and clearly mark BOOK POST on the outside and place in the mail. Incidentally, rates to foreign countries are cheaper than rates within our own country, so it will cost you little more than the effort required to sort thru your library collection and wrap those you no longer wish. Your help will serve a wonderful cause.

"JUST BETWEEN US"

"The program looks wonderful. I hadn't planned on attending. Now, I feel I can't afford to miss it!"

F. M.

"The program represents excellent variety and I'm glad to note that all levels — university, high school, children's theatre, and community are equally represented. Sister Angelita deserves much credit!"

Sr. M. C.

"Does anyone else have this problem, I'd like to know? Principals in the schools at which I teach seem to expect us to step in and, in six week's time, train voices that project in auditoriums that would challenge a professional's voice. They must be Seniors — that's the most important requisite, it seems!"

L. McC

(Editor's note: It would be interesting to have a high school Principal answer this!)

RECORDINGS and SLIDES

If you have slides or recordings of some of your recent productions bring these with you to the Convention. A special room will be set aside for viewing and listening.

PLAYS

DEMONSTRATIONS

DISCUSSIONS

Don't miss all of these when your

Catholic Theatre Conference

presents

"FROM PAGE TO STAGE"

THE WELCOME MAT

Mount St. Dominic Academy
Caldwell, New Jersey
Sister M. Catherine Denis, O.P.

Sister Mary Teresita, P.B.V.M.
St. Joseph's School
Farley, Iowa

Merrimack College
North Andover, Massachusetts
Rev. Francis X. Smith, O.S.A.

Stonehill College
North Easton, Massachusetts
Professor Herbert A. Wessling

St. Peter's Drama Club
Beaver Dam, Wisconsin
Wm. L. Pshebeliski, President

St. Mary's High School
Dover, New Hampshire
Brother Joseph E. Desmond

St. Mary Academy
Austin, Texas
Sister Miriam, C.S.C.

Footlights Club, Fontbonne College
St. Louis, Missouri
Belle M. Mullins

Notre Dame College
Manchester, New Hampshire
Sister Mary St. Armand, C.S.C.

Canisius College
Buffalo, New York
Rev. Harold A. Pfeiffer, S.J.

St. Mary Central Catholic High School
Milford, Massachusetts
Mrs. Margaret Barton

Convent of the Sacred Heart
Albany, New York
Mother A. Boyle, R.S.C.J.

Theatre Guild of St. Thomas More Parish
Decatur, Georgia
Mrs. E. J. Maurer, Secretary

St. Joseph Preparatory Seminary
Holy Trinity, Alabama
Rev. Father Custodian, M.S. S.T.

Saint Scholastica Academy
Canon City, Colorado
Sr. M. Estelle, O.S.B.

Convent of the Sacred Heart
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

St. Mary High School
Cincinnati, Ohio
Miss R. Foley

Paduan Club Players
Louisville, Kentucky

Mt. St. Joseph Drama Club
Rutland, Vermont
Sister M. Imelda

St. Catherine Academy
The Bronx, New York
Sister Mary Etheldreda, R.S.M.

Immaculate Conception High School
Lodi, New Jersey
Sister Mary Justitia

The Paulist Players
New York, N.Y.

St. Catherine Academy
Bronx, New York
Sister Mary Etheldreda, R.S.M.

BROADWAY IN REVIEW

3 FOR TONIGHT — Without any sets or costumes, Paul Gregory once again challenges the imagination of his audience and offers them the best musical revue of the season. Hiram Sherman as the announcer gives it a pleasantly informal atmosphere into which the Champions dance with grace and humor, but the compelling feature is Harry Belafonte whose Negro songs and spirituals cast a spell over the audience. Here at last, is a show that is clean, charming and witty. At the Plymouth.

TEACH ME HOW TO CRY — A high school idyl of a boy and girl who both have many odds against them in their home. Written with sensitive understanding and humor; extremely well played and produced, this is really a triumph for the off-Broadway theatre.

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF — Act I is a monologue by Barbara Bel Geddes; Burl Ives takes over Act II, and the whole is very close to an honest nightmare. The story has plenty of sex; the hero is an alcoholic; 'Big Daddy' is dying of cancer and his grandchildren are small ruffians. The dialogue, however, is uncanny in its understanding of the characters. There are two pieces of good news about it, one is Jo Mielziner's beautiful, unrealistic set and the encouraging fact that Tennessee Williams has deleted the obscene story in Act III. It is extremely well acted. At the Morosco.

THIEVES CARNIVAL — Another little theatre success. An imaginative and lively production of Anouilh's nonsensical but amusing farce which is filling the Cherry Lane Theatre.

CRY, THE BELOVED COUNTRY, the verse drama by Felicia Komai based on the famous novel by Alan Patou, is now available. This should not be confused with the dramatization by Maxwell Anderson. This version is published by Friendship Press, 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York. Colleges and universities will find some interesting material in this work and may wish to use it in part or all.

IN REVIEW

THEATRICAL LIGHTING PRACTICE

by Joel E. Rubin and Leland H. Watson

Theatre Arts Booms, N.Y.; 1955; 142 pp.; \$3.75

The field of theatrical lighting has not yet reached stability either in its concepts or in its techniques. There are principally two reasons for this: the technical improvements in lighting equipment which are continually being made and the development of new phases of theatrical activity such as arena theatre and television. Nevertheless, certain principles have been evolved, mostly in educational centers where a few talented and imaginative people have had the opportunities and the facilities for experiment. The texts which have been written as a result of these studies have served as the basis for lighting courses in other educational institutions. The primary problem has been that technical developments in lighting instruments and control devices make these texts obsolete within a comparatively short time. A secondary problem has been that the texts have dealt almost exclusively with lighting in a non-professional proscenium theatre.

A remedy to this secondary problem has appeared in the form of a book entitled *THEATRICAL LIGHTING PRACTICE* by Joel E. Rubin and Leland H. Watson. In this book the authors survey the entire field of theatrical lighting. Included are chapters on lighting practice in colleges, the commercial theatre, arena production, open-air production, puppetry, and television. Collegiate practices, with which most students of lighting are familiar, serve as the starting point and variations from them as employed in the other areas are described. Included in each of the sections are representative light plots. A second part of the book deals with job opportunities in the various fields of theatrical lighting. There is an apparently exhaustive bibliography and an extensive list of manufacturers of lighting equipment.

This book is not intended to be a basic text in lighting. Indeed, it presupposes a knowledge of lighting and its terminology which would be possessed only by one who had had some experience in the field. Nor is it an exhaustive advanced text. It is a survey and in many instances leaves the reader wishing for more details. But it does bring together much information on lighting which could not be obtained otherwise without extended investigation.

It would seem that this book would be useful to three groups. First, to the teacher of stagecraft who wished to broaden his knowledge of lighting outside the area of educational theatre. Secondly, to the technician concerned with planning and executing the lighting of a production. Although many of the situations described involve more and better equipment than is likely to be found in the average non-commercial theatre, the book may stimulate the technician to more imaginative use of the equipment

he has and may also guide him in selecting new equipment to improve the theatre. Thirdly, to the serious student of lighting it presents a survey of the whole field, both in the techniques practiced and in the opportunities for jobs as a lighting technician.

Fred W. Syburg
University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana

CROSS-VIEWS

Polls are often distasteful — and perhaps this will be also — but we enclose it for what it is worth. Two high school student reporters at the Chicago Drama Festival (1954) asked the following questions and summarized replies as listed below. Forty students were interviewed.

- (1) What qualities do you favor or dislike in a critic-judge?
Of the students interviewed almost all stressed "failure of direct criticism" as a frequent and unpardonable fault.
(Editor's note: This is interesting in view of the fact that directors are most frequently concerned about the possibility of their students "being hurt" by criticism. Could it be that we, as directors, are more averse to direct criticism than our charges?)
- (2) How has Drama helped you?
No one was hesitant about answering this question. The twenty-two girls listed poise, self-confidence and better speech as assets they have received through drama.
The boys said Drama gave them ease in conversation, and they learned teamwork in the mechanics of the theatre. Both boys and girls agreed that it gave them a better appreciation of the theatre and of plays, in general. One young lady who won an award for her acting beamingly explained that Drama gave her a whole new personality.
- (3) What do you intend to do in Drama after high school?
Eighteen of the girls and eleven of the boys intended to participate in college plays. The remaining boys and girls intended to support neighborhood and church groups.
- (4) What would you like to see at the convention?
Celebrities headed the list with stage craft a close second. Two girls suggested that CTC sponsor summer theatre groups for the college and high school department.

THE MODERN THEATRE

A FORM OF THE MARIAN APOSTOLATE

By The Rev. Jozef Boon, C.SS.R.

Translated by Hugh Dickinson

(At the International Marian Congress, held at Rome 23-31 October 1951, on the eve of the declaration of the dogma of the Assumption of the Most Holy Virgin, Father Boon was invited to give a report on the modern theatre, as a form of the Marian apostolate, to the assembled Fathers of the Redemptorist Order. By kind permission of Father Boon, a prolific playwright and himself one of the outstanding figures in the movement he describes, his report is here presented as a special supplement of the Catholic Theatre Conference Bulletin.)

In these days of Marian studies, I feel I should do more than describe for you the storm of popular enthusiasm that has swept Flanders, that has been called --in a very special sense--a Mystique, and that stirs up and transports the spirit of great communities of audiences. It is not my place to propagandize for the modern religious theatre. It has, of late, conquered all classes of society and its triumphant advance continues in all countries. But I feel it my duty to justify the existence of this theatrical movement, not as if to defend it before its judges, but rather to show on what solid foundations it rests: it will be easier, then, to grasp what possibilities this modern religious theatre can offer in the service of the Marian idea.

I shall first set forth what could be called the philosophy of dramatic art, religious in subject matter and Marian in emphasis. Secondly, we shall see how the Marian drama took shape during the Middle Ages. And finally, I shall tell you what has occurred in Flanders in these last few years and how the multitudes have been won over.

I. IDEAS, PRINCIPLES, and ORIGIN OF THE RELIGIOUS AND MARIAN DRAMA

Dante wrote that art is the grandson of God, meaning by this that art reflects the splendor that shines on Christ His Son. Art can have no other end but God. Is it not, indeed, the most beautiful thing in man? Hence art can have no other end than man himself has.

Art is the purest expression of human genius. It is the outward sign of all that we experience in our inmost hearts, in our most intimate emotions and in our vaulting inspiration which prompts us to say: "Our Father Who art in heaven." Art is man's high dream, born of his homesickness for God.

God is the origin and end, the first word and the final syllable, the alpha and the omega, of every art; just as nature and man himself have God as their end and speak, each in his own way, the language of God. Before the birth of Christ, at the height of paganism, art at its best already knew this nostalgia, this longing for God. Art, and its human creator, the artist, long to be restored to God, their supreme, eternal Creator; they wish to raise over earth the canticle of eternal beauty which inspires their whole being.

If we assert that the theatre, and especially the modern theatre, with its spectacular conception of great community audiences that flock to it by the dozens and even hundreds of thousands--if we wish to affirm, I say, that this theatre is a form of the Marian apostolate, then we shall have to show that dramatic art, when it lends itself to this apostolate, must remain--to the roots of its being--faithful to its own definition: in other words, dramatic art must remain art and drama, else it will be forced to speak a language other than that of art; yet it can serve this noble ideal without diminishing its intrinsic artistic value. Art is of God, and with all its being it must glorify God, it must please God and sing His canticle, dulcia cantica dramatis, in the midst of this earthly life; and, by its created beauty, must glorify Him Who is infinite beauty.

If we examine the evolution of dramatic art amongst ancient peoples, we can establish undeniably that it developed from religious rites. Theatre is the form of art which sprang from the actions of man adoring God. It is the action of man venerating God and rendering Him thanks: this action develops from narrative, from choral songs, from man's worshipful gestures; little by little, the struggle, the dualism in his soul and his life, manifests itself; there is evil, there is the enemy who wakens in him his anguish; the human battle is joined; his life, torn between evil and God, stiffens in the face of the enemy who unmasks before him; evil becomes personified, becomes incarnated, in a character who opposes him.

As long as the rite retained its purity of form as a religious act, man expressed in simple narrative and lyric choruses his aspirations, his nostalgia, his gratitude and his veneration of God; he expressed his fear, his anxieties when facing a power other than God: this evil that he knew to exist, whether as a dark and mysterious force that lay in wait for him, or whether as an incarnation in another human being who opposed him. At first, the rite preserves its unilateral form: man himself expresses before God his sentiments and his fear of the enemy; but the enemy does not take part in this ritual action, and so the rite remains unilateral.

But once the rite evolves and becomes drama, the idea of the enemy takes shape in an actor who opposes the principal actor: drama is created, it expresses the conflict between good and evil; we witness the struggle of man as he seeks to achieve his end in the harsh struggle of life on earth. Drama becomes bilateral, in contrast to the unilateral rite. Tragedy is born of this action, this conflict, which ensues between the hero and his antagonist. Dramatic art remains faithful to its essence, it is the most evolved art, the most complete, and interprets more than any other art, the homesickness for God, the ascent of man towards his destination. It is actually living man himself, the actor, who is the artistic form of drama and who expresses all the action.

Moreover, amongst all peoples, is not dramatic art the glorious apparition which demonstrates that a people has arrived at the apogee of its perpetual development? Dramatic art is the art of human action, which translates for us the vital problem of God and man, and in which man battles to arrive at union with God.

Let us add that the drama, which cannot exist without the actor, also cannot exist without an audience; and that a play depends upon the reactions of the audience which, in turn, influence the actor. The spectator participates in the drama, for the drama unfolds quite as much in him as in the actor on the stage. If we keep in mind this specific character of dramatic art--the spectator's active share in the drama, we can readily conceive the present formula for the modern religious drama, where the crowd, as actor, participates in the action almost as much as it does as spectator.

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In developing these principles, we believe we have shown the foundations, both wide and deep, on which we shall soon be able to erect the Marian drama, the canticum dramatis that the divine office invites us to sing before the throne of the Blessed Virgin.

The Marian drama begins at Nazareth. Mary, the young maid, saluted by the Angel of God, said her Fiat and God came to earth, visibly; for nine months later she smiled for the first time on her son, God Who became man, and, thereby, her own child. She, the Mother of God, carried God in her arms and smiled at God become visible on earth. "Abba, Father," she murmured! "My Son," she wept for joy! And at that very moment a total revolution occurred in art, and above all in dramatic art. God is no longer only in heaven, He is in our midst on earth. Emmanuel... that while we acknowledge Him to be God seen by men, we may be drawn by Him to the love of things unseen. And since then, the ascent towards God cannot be made except through Christ. Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium Tuum.

Henceforth, tragedy takes place on earth, between Christ and man; the nostalgia for God, right up to its sublime mystical forms, will become infinite love which moves the soul and leads it into the still waters of grace. Omnia ad me traham, I shall draw all things unto Me, says Christ. But the eternal adversary stood before Christ: "Art Thou the Christ?" asked the tempter--for Lucifer wishes to push back the boundaries in like manner; the struggle will be fought on earth between the devil and Christ, God on earth. The tragedy of Calvary has begun. Already, on that first Christmas night, at the very moment of her unspeakable joy, or right after, Mary looked into the eyes of her Christ and there foresaw Calvary, the terrible tragedy of the cross. The Blessed Virgin's life will be sealed by that of Jesus, Who is God on earth; she bears the imprint of this divine-human drama. The drama of God and the soul takes place in the soul of Christ, throughout his life: "...My sorrow always before My eyes"; it takes place, too, in the heart of Mary who knows that her love will serve only to rear her child and to prepare Him for His passion, and, as it were, render it as profound as possible. Henceforth, neither history, nor theology, nor art will be to represent the figure of Christ, or His drama, without Mary. Art, asserts the German philosopher Hegel, can no longer conceive of itself without Christ, and we might add: nor Christ without

His Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary.

At that point, Christian drama was born. It has only to be developed. Christ will be its foundation and will lay its cornerstone. When He institutes the Holy Eucharist, the sacrament of man's union with God, he establishes a rite. He takes bread, raises His eyes to heaven, gives thanks to God, blesses the bread, breaks and distributes the elements of the bread among his apostles, and pronounces the words which transform it... The Word is made Flesh, it is no longer merely a sign, as in the language of men; the Word made flesh produces reality, just as did the Fiat of Creation. The act is eternal reality, word and deed are one, and they achieve the sacrifice of God, as it took place on Calvary, in the presence of Mary and with her full collaboration. This act of Christ's at the Last Supper, having the same sacrifice of Calvary behind it like a double image, is the commencement of the liturgical rite. And from it, in turn, will be born Christian drama. There is no need to tell how the liturgy was derived from the rite, how its content--offeratory, consecration and communion--was expressed in the growing liturgy. You know how the liturgy availed itself of choirs, in the manner of Greek drama, to enlighten the faithful in regard to the mysteries of the act, and you know, too, how in the Middle Ages the Christian drama was derived from the liturgy by the same process that produced the ancient drama. Once born, the modern Christian drama persisted through the Renaissance, and has revived, especially in our own day, in a popular form that draws the people into the action, engrosses the whole Christian community, and becomes eminently Marian; so that during these last five years, the most beautiful productions have been plays about the Virgin.

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We have felt that it would be helpful and even necessary first to lay the foundation, to show how the philosophy of Christian art accounts for the vitality of the religious theatre and, specifically, the Marian theatre. It is extremely important to be able to justify the notion of the Christian and Marian theatre, quite as much in respect to the philosophy of art, as in respect to history and dogma. There must be nothing factitious in this conception; the theatre is not a substitute for art, to be used for extrinsic ends as a minor devotion! It is art, it is religious art, as the soul itself is religious.

II. THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE RELIGIOUS AND MARIAN DRAMA IN FLEMISH AND DUTCH LITERATURE

Since the beginning of Christianity, the history of theatrical development demonstrates, quite as much among oriental peoples as in our western countries, that the Christian theatre expands at the same rate as the Christian idea. A new world is being established, one which avails itself at times of certain elements recovered from the ancient world, but the idea centers about Christ, and the Blessed Virgin is always there. The history of the Christian theatre is the history of the Church. Space is lacking in which to consider the separate theatrical elements that arose from the liturgy; it would require a detailed study of every country, and others have already done it.

By means of certain ancient texts, obsolete rituals, bas-reliefs in cathedrals, and motifs in stained-glass windows, they have succeeded in reconstructing that slow, but sure, evolution. We see how the scene of the Annunciation, first to be emphasized, became theatre: the Angel and the Virgin are included among the mansiones or little houses in the church choir and the scene between them takes place, much as if a stone bas-relief were to come to life. Although still firmly embedded in the liturgy, the scene is already dramatic action. These liturgical tableaux were still in vogue up to the French Revolution, notably in the Church of Our Lady at Courtrai, in Belgium. But, from the XIIth to the XIIIth Centuries, we lack the central links of that development which connect those preliminary sketches to the fully elaborated plays of the later period.

The documents of these centuries, moreover, are very scarce, in regard to the Lowlands. But comparisons with other countries, and of early plays with those of the following centuries, permit no doubt about the Marian development itself. Bas-reliefs and certain texts from other countries give proof of the existence of examples--for instance, such a play as Theophilus, which is essentially the ancient legend of Faust, but which interposes the Virgin as mediatrix between God and Satan.

A very ancient Flemish play, Masscheroen, interpolated into the text of a Marian play of the XVth Century, shows clearly that earlier epochs utilized the theme of Mary's interposing her mercy in the face of the devil's demands. We are, however, well into the XVth Century before we discover the first religious texts entirely composed of a very remarkable dramatic and psychological composition that offers sufficient proof that an elaboration must have preceded it.

The most ancient Marian play is Maricke van Nimegon (Little Marie of Nimegue), the well-known legend which St. Alphonsus reproduced in The Glories of Mary. For seven years the young girl lives with the devil at Anvers: she is the cause, through her wicked life, of many sins and murders. Remorse drives her to return to Nimegue, despite the devil's opposition. Unable to prevent her, the devil decides to accompany her. When they reach Nimegue, the country fair is in full swing. A traveling theatrical troupe enacts the play, Masscheroen, wherein the devil complains before God that He rescues from damnation souls that belong to the devil by right. It is always Mary who interposes and whose mercy triumphs. Witnessing this scene where the Virgin pleads for souls, Marie is overwhelmed, and it is at this moment that she says the famous line: "This is better than a sermon!" Not that we intend, in quoting this line, to substitute theatre for preaching, for to preaching alone belongs the official mission of spreading the divine word; what we do intend is to suggest that the theatre may reach souls in places where a sermon no longer can, and that it has the power to give imaginative life to the privileges and the grandeur of the Blessed Virgin.

Little Marie is converted and does penance. This text, while being a form of the apostolate, is above all theatre in the true sense of the word and achieves its apostolic aim precisely because it is so solidly art and drama. Consequently, it has enjoyed hundreds of performances, down to our own day, and has been added to the repertoires of dramatic companies of the highest repute.

Equally remarkable are two other manuscripts: The First Joy and The Seventh Joy of Mary; that is, the Annunciation and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. We know from some explicit documents that seven such plays existed, each dramatizing one of the joys of the Blessed Virgin. And each year, in a seven-year cycle, one of them would be staged in the Grand'Place of Brussels, after the procession of Our Lady from the church of Sablon. This was in the XVth Century. We know, too, that it was a priest who composed the texts, and this fact explains the depth and accuracy of the doctrine they dramatized, so that the play dealing with the Assumption adequately illustrates the tradition on which the proclamation of the dogma was to be based. It would be really interesting to translate certain passages of it for you, to show with what sweetness--a sweetness that recalls St. Bernard, the author speaks to us of the Virgin, or has St. John or the Choryphee speak of her.

I cannot forget a very charming Marian play of the XVth Century, by Cornelis Everaert de Bruges, entitled Maria Heedeken, but commonly known simply as The Rosary. Here is the plot: A young man, eager to serve the Blessed Virgin, was wont to gather flowers each day and make a garland of them to lay at the feet of the Virgin's statue. When he entered a monastery, a great temptation assailed him, for he could no longer render the Blessed Mother this act of piety. But his superior counseled him to recite the Rosary. Whereupon, as he recites each Ave, he sees a flower bloom in the snow of the monastery garden. So he understands the salutary effect of the Rosary, and the joy he thereby affords the Blessed Virgin.

Flandria marialis has truly consecrated its theatre to the Blessed Mother.

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Shakespeare calls the theatre the chronicle of the times. The ideas which dominate a people seize upon the theatre, too. And the theatre then reflects back upon the people these same ideas crystallized in artistic form. If the Marian idea truly belongs, so to speak, among the fundamental truths which constitute the Christian drama, we have every right to rejoice that the theatre is attempting, more than ever, to portray Mary for us.

I need not demonstrate further the very great influence of the theatre: His Holiness has just done so, in a most magistral fashion, in his allocution to the representatives of the Catholic Theatre Union. Everyone will concede that every new idea that has been launched in the course of history, has made use of the theatre. The reason is easy to find. The theatre is the most human of the arts, for in it men themselves, actors and spectators alike, achieve the drama by a mutual action which they perform, the ones upon the others. Therein lies the specific character of the theatre: drama is not achieved until it is played by actors, and it is not truly played until it is given before spectators who react and take part in the action.

III. THE MODERN MARIAN THEATRE IN FLANDERS.

It remains for me to report to you what the modern theatre has accomplished

from the Marian point of view. I could have made this survey for you by considering the many countries where the revival of the religious theatre has occurred during this first half of the century. Such a bird's-eye view would not, of course, be devoid of interest. I think it would prove to us this: little by little, the artists are becoming aware of their mission, as the Middle Ages understood it: the actor is notably the "artifex," the artisan of the people to whom he belongs; and he must express their ideas and beliefs: his role is to serve.

We see now why the Marian play assumes a more and more preponderant place in the repertoires of our new theatrical organizations. And we are convinced that the plays of the Virgin will gain now luster if this point is insisted upon: the artist must serve the people and the people's aspirations. Without a doubt, just as the medieval artisan worked on the cathedrals, the modern artist must live, and be in intellectual communion, with the religious ideas of the people; and priests must guide the artists, just as in the Middle Ages, in order to furnish them with the theological basis of the subject they are to elaborate. In this respect, the value of their artistic work, though done "to order," will not be lessened.

Forgive me for confining myself largely to Flanders.

It was in 1910 that there occurred the first signs of a revival of the theatre. And a Marian play marked its rebirth. Canon Michiels, master of theology and dean of Hal, in the small city of Brabant at the gates of Brussel, decided to stage a play of the Blessed Virgin, in order to dramatize the pilgrimage to the miraculous statue of the Blessed Virgin and to keep Mary alive in the hearts of the pilgrims. Every fifth year, for forty years, performances have been given on several consecutive Sundays and last more than four hours. The play is the life of Mary, written in accordance with dogmatic texts and the living tradition. The simplicity of the play and its music generated intense emotion. L'Abbé Michiels and the priest-author Walgrave created the play, watched over its growth, and breathed into it their theological ideas. They strove with special care to dramatize the Assumption of Mary and her Coronation in Heaven. Need I add that it is precisely these two tableaux which, for forty years, have excited the deepest emotion in the crowd?

All that has been said and written about this play, whether by learned men or the simplest of spectators, would make up an anthology that would provide powerful proof of the highly religious character and the great influence of the Marian theatre. Since its creation, more than 250,000 spectators have come to see the play. All the principles which must be basic to the religious theatre are therein fully respected; that is to say, the play is art, the dogma is represented in its most intrinsic form, without alteration or violation of historical truth, and without fanciful exaggeration. The characters, especially Mary, move within the limits of the evangelistic accounts and make no gesture, say no word, not in keeping with their nature or their mission.

These performances were held indoors. Little by little, the theatre in Flanders has achieved closer contact with the masses; it left the theatres to take

place in the open air, in public squares and outdoor arenas. The places of pilgrimage created their own Marian plays. Tongres, the most ancient Marian town, had its play, The Seven Joys. Other cities or shrines prefer to stage The Seven Sorrows. The dominant idea of the latter play is this: Mary, knowing full well that in roasting Jesus, she but brings Him closer, step by step, to an ignominious death on the cross, continues, nevertheless, to lavish on Him her maternal love, while already, in anticipation, she is living through the Passion in which she will be so intimately involved later on. It was the contention of the ascetic author, Father Joseph Schrijvers, that prose was inadequate to convey this idea in its fullness, that only the theatre could succeed in doing it! And, truly, we lived through moving scenes, we saw the Queen of Sorrows come down to the forestage and speak to mothers and to thousands of spectators, and ask them: "Have you known sorrow like unto my sorrow?" And we interpreted in our own way the impressive silence, the barely suppressed emotion, the stifled sobs. Those were unforgettable summer nights!

Zutendaal, Neigem, and so many other holy places, unknown to you all but dear to the heart of Mary, had each its Marian play, which contributed not a little in attracting pilgrims in great numbers. By turns, the legend, the history, the mission of Mary were evoked on the stage. For example, I see again the Virgin of Zutendaal--one of the most ancient shrines of Mary--exhibiting her book in which are inscribed all the names of mankind and carrying a bunch of grapes, a symbol of the graces she accords to all inhabitants of that village, fertile, thanks to Mary, in religious vocations. If the theatre did no more than to draw attention to the Marian idea linked with each of these shrines, its existence would be fully justified.

Let me mention further productions where the Marian idea predominates. First of all, there was the play entitled Credo, which brought to a close the Sixth Congress of Malines under the chairmanship of His Eminence Cardinal van Roey. No less than 125,000 spectators were present at that profession of faith, far more as co-actors with the 2,000 actors on the stage, than as passive spectators. Never shall I be able to forget Mary's entrance, when she comes to take her place of honor in the Church, surrounded by five hundred angels. Once again, the crowd understood that the reign of Christ includes also the reign of Mary in the heart and in the home.

At Bruges, in 1938, The Play of the Holy Blood was produced. The stage, set against the background of the old belfry, included the tower, ninety metres high, on which, in a fairy scene of lights, angels stood in all the embrasures and under all the portals, to salute Mary, whose role was closely woven into the entire action of the play. The actors numbered three thousand. To date, the spectators have totalled four hundred thousand...

Across the centuries of Bruges' history, Mary watches over the city, over the blood of Christ preserved there, so that when the city is saved by the Holy Blood, Mary is there, really present. So the play ends in an apotheosis representing Mary, venerated, crowned, and arrayed in a gorgeous mantle of Bruges lace. The many letters from actors and spectators have expressed their great satisfaction with the fact that, through The Play of the Holy Blood, the city has once more become con-

scious that, from a very early date, it has been a Marian city. A story will illustrate better than words the influence which such dramatic presentations can wield. An English lady, a Protestant, had attended one of the rehearsals because, her sailing reservations having already been made, she could not stay for the performance itself. "Never did I understand so well the role of Mary," she said. "It's quite different from what we were told about her!" What if that were the beginning of her conversion...

Besides all these, two other Marian devotions have been able to enlist the services of the theatre: the Little Office and the Rosary. In 1938, the Redemptorist, Father Stallaert, wrote a play that offered a means of restoring to the laity the Little Office of Mary, thus reviving an ancient custom. Catholic Action and the Marian Congregations naturally formed the nucleus of this movement. Father Stallaert's work bore fruit, as we can see from the fact that more than one hundred thousand copies of the Little Office have been distributed in Flanders and in The Netherlands during the last ten years. His proposal was to make from the Marian office a play for the people in which the liturgical choir becomes part of the dramatic action. During preparation of the text, it soon became evident that the entire Office, despite the fact that it contains the Psalms and the Common of the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin, presented no obstacle to its realization; on the contrary, a drama of the purest style was achieved, and all without changing a word! The Office was truly "performed." It proved that all the theories expounded above are not only viable, but also high in dramatic interest.

Next, the Rosary. At Lourdes, Fatima, Bannoux, and Beauraing, has not the Virgin repeatedly recommended praying the Rosary? Fatima especially teaches us to meditate each decade. Thus Bannoux has given rise to a play on the Rosary. In it, the fifteen mysteries are to be acted, so that the scenes themselves will induce the spectator to meditate. At each new tableau, the decade of Hail Mary's will be prayed aloud by actors and audience--not as an addition, but as a spontaneous prayer arising from the play itself. Here play and prayer find themselves closely united.

Will our century turn out to be that of popular plays attended by thousands of spectators? I can go beyond the frontiers of my own country to cite you the recent Marian Congress of Rennes, France, where Henri Brochet produced before forty thousand spectators, Our Lady of the Twelve Stars, which he himself wrote. It is but one example among thousands, and it would be impossible to mention all the theatrical productions of this kind throughout the world. In his religious plays, Henri Gheon gave us a magnificent representation, moving in its tenderness, of the home life of the Blessed Virgin. I am thinking of his beautiful mystery, Christmas in the Market Place, as well as other plays by him, by Henri Brochet, and by many others.

IV. CONCLUSION

From all this, we can reach one conclusion: once again the people are coming together, and once again a spirit of community and solidarity is making itself felt. Look at Rome. Thousands of people, tens and hundreds of thousands, are brought

together here and, as on the first Pentecost, feel reinvigorated, fortified, encouraged, for common prayer.

The Blessed Virgin calls the crowds to her sanctuary, and on all sides the Hail Mary's mount to heaven. It is thus, too, that the multitudes foregather to witness popular plays celebrating the glories of Mary

May dramatists be able to increase the richness, the beauty, the sublimity of Mary's mission, and, through the help of actors who do not remain insensible to the significance of the play, give the crowds that intense emotion evoked by art united with grace--art and grace which, finding each other once again, unite in God.

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NOTE

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WHICH IS THE OPPOSITE OF PROSE (Continued from page 1)

Let me illustrate from *Venus Observed*. A duke plans a second marriage with one of his three former mistresses, but leaves his son to choose which lady, and indicate his choice by presenting her with an apple. The moment comes. The son says:—

I'd like it,

Father, if Mrs. Dill would have this apple.
She unsuspecting answers:—

I'd like it, too; though it's prettier on the tree.

On the surface level, fruit has been offered and accepted with the casual observation that apples look prettier growing than after plucking; yet to us in the audience has also been conveyed the notion that bodily love has likewise been found prettier before than after the having. The Garden of Eden, the Judgment of Paris, Juno the fruitful mother goddess, all, though unacknowledged, are insinuated into our minds by this little exchange. Yet not a word out of character has been spoken either by the well-bred young man or the kindly, homely woman.

Poetry then has to do with meaning. Verse on the other hand has nothing to do with meaning; we sometimes speak of nonsense verse. Verse is manipulation of language to make a pattern of sound, a rhythmical pattern called metre, combined with patterns called rhyme, alliteration, assonance, which are made from the consonant and vowel sounds out of which language is constructed. Verse might be called the melody of language, poetry its orchestration.

From this it will be seen that reference to intensity of language, layers of meaning, while explaining the value of poetry in the theatre, in no way explains the value of verse. The dialogue of Tchekov carries its overtones and undertones, but Tchekov does not write in verse; which brings us to the difficult subject of poetic prose. I do not propose to deal with this except to point out that Tchekov did not write in English; that O'Casey and Synge, two other alleged exponents of poetic prose, are both Irish; that, in fact, I cannot recall the name of any English claimant to the title of poetic-prose dramatist. There may well be significance in this.

We English are known for our love of understatement, for saying far less than we mean. We recoil in horror from what we call "high-falutin' talk." How should the normal speech of such a people be capable of layers of meaning? In order to convey the heights and depths of experience of a nation of understaters a new idiom, a new turn of speech has to be fashioned; something quite other than the dialogue of day to day.

Here at once comes trouble. Since the dramatist is making English men and women say the kind of thing that English men and women are not accustomed to say, the actor will find himself without examples of such speech in the life around him on which to model his phrasing and manner of delivery. He will complain he has been given what he calls "literary dialogue," will declare it to be unspeakable,

and proceed to deliver it in such a manner as to make it unacceptable to his audience. Verse is the poet's way of overcoming this.

Mr. Fry writing of his famous sliced prose says that "those who speak it may occasionally find it helpful." Mr. Eliot, more concerned with the unperceived operation of verse on the hearer, suggests that its rhythms working through the more prosaic passages prepare the ear for moments of poetic intensity. Both suggestions are true as far as they go; both need amplification.

To the eye, verse is distinguishable from prose by the way it is placed on the page: besides being cut up into sentences, it is cut up into lines. To a reader, unless he puts up a stiff and conscious resistance, the split second it takes his eye to flick from the end of one line to the beginning of the next will become an additional form of punctuation, a sort of sub-comma. Now the poet who understands his craft is going to take advantage of this and manipulate his dialogue so that what may be termed the dramatic punctuation, as opposed to the grammatical punctuation, falls at the ends of the lines.

I'd like it,

Father, if Mrs. Dill would have this apple.
Write this as prose and you get, "I'd like it, Father, if Mrs. Dill would have this apple." In the verse version the word "father" is much more heavily pointed, seeming to say "Father! are you attending?" In the prose version this additional effect goes for nothing. Another way to point particular words is to use assonance or alliteration. "if Mrs. Dill would have this apple." Here the repetition of the vowel sound in "have" and "apple" surely gives both words additional prominence.

By far the most noteworthy of verse effects, however, is rhythm. Speech is dependent on breath; healthy breathing is rhythmical. This is immensely important both to actor and audience. It means that an actor will find lines rhythmically phrased easy to speak, and it means that a theatre audience, like a musical audience, can be drawn into sympathy with rhythms uttered from the stage, and find itself falling, relaxed, into healthy, even breathing — into a state of well-being in fact — however vexed and strained it may have been by the day's work just left behind.

The poet's job is made easier by the fact that the need to draw breath governs the normal phrasing of every day. He can therefore set a rhythm going in perfectly familiar idiom, for whose manner of delivery ample precedent exists in the life around us; and then, his metre once firmly established, working in it he can lead actor and audience, degree by degree, away from the familiar into the unfamiliar, until they are able to accept as natural an eloquence and lucidity quite beyond the usual range of twentieth-century, tongue-tied English men and women.

Examine the first act of *The Cocktail Party* and note with what skill, even cunning, such a process has been carried out. At curtain-rise we plunge into

(Continued on next page)

a painfully unsuccessful party, where well-bred guests, to cover up an awkward situation, are valiantly struggling to keep the ball of vapid party-talk rolling. Their highly mannered, over-emphatic speech, helped in the second line by a couple of italicised words, starts to hammer a metre into our heads. The number of syllables per line may vary considerably, but three heavy stresses are persistently there, and soon the omission or increase of one would cause us as much disquiet as a sudden irregularity of our heartbeat. As we settle to the rhythm the over-emphasis becomes unnecessary and the affectation of the party manners is allowed to give way a little to unobtrusive sincerity, still couched in the most everyday terms.

I know you think I'm a silly old woman
But I'm really very serious. Lavinia takes
me seriously.
I believe that's the reason why she went
away—

The party breaks up, leaving the uneasy host alone with a man, at first laconic in the extreme, who almost immediately has taken charge of the conversation (and three-stress metre) employing turns of speech we usually associate with a doctor in charge of a case. A new dimension has been given to the dialogue; the stranger, we perceive, is not merely an unidentified guest, he is also a physician; perhaps a priest as well, or a supernatural power; the voice of God even? The host attempts a protest at his guest's seemingly unwarranted assumption of this strangely authoritative bedside manner. He gets the reply:—

All you wanted was the luxury
Of an intimate disclosure to a stranger.
Let me, therefore, remain the stranger.
But let me tell you, that to approach the
stranger
Is to invite the unexpected, release a new
force,
Or let the genie out of the bottle.

One force released at this moment, and not again throughout the play securely corked back into its bottle, is the force of poetry.

Mr. Eliot thinks of poetic drama as a social creation. He regards his own and contemporary work as that of the first generation only, and declares his greatest hope is to lay foundations on which others may build. Should this hope be fulfilled it is conceivable, I suppose, that some remote descendants of the present reticent English may grow up so familiar with the rich expressive language the dramatists have forged that daily, in their homes and going about their work, their tongues may habitually wag in poetic prose. Should that unlikely time ever come, theatre poets will then presumably be able to dispense with verse as an aid to the proper delivery and reception of their poetry. In the meanwhile, with communication between man and man still so pitifully fumbling, with the avoidance of tragic misunderstanding by the timely formulation of an adequate phrase still in itself a small Pentecost, the poets would seem to be right to regard verse in our theatre as a necessary adjunct to poetry.

REGIONAL NEWS

The second semi-annual **College Theatre Day** for Catholic Theatre in the Detroit area was held Saturday, March 19, at Mercy College in Northwest Detroit. The plan of this year's program was a Television Workshop in preparation for Catholic student participation in the programming of Detroit's Education Station WTVS, Channel 56, which goes on the air in June.

Registration began at 8:30 and Holy Mass was offered at 9:00 o'clock. Father Thomas Bresnahan, Mercy College Chaplain, and co-worker of Father Keller in the Christopher movement, addressed the students on the significance of Catholic Theatre.

To carry out the Workshop plan, Assumption College, Windsor, presented a one-act play, **THE FLATTERING WORD**; Nazareth College, Kalamazoo, a scene from **THE SEVEN NUNS OF LAS VEGAS**; and Marygrove College, Detroit, the Balcony Scene from **ROMEO AND JULIET**.

With Mercy College's new closed circuit television equipment on the auditorium stage, the audience had the opportunity of seeing scenes from those plays revamped and redirected for a live television show. They were privileged to observe Professor Edward Stasheff, former N.B.C. director and currently of the University of Michigan TV staff, and one of the country's top television directors at work. Members of Mercy College Radio and TV classes worked as a technical crew.

Important on the agenda was discussion of the meeting of the NCTC at Notre Dame in June. This was followed by announcements of other local current theatre attractions.

Twenty-eight schools were represented at the Theatre Day. Dominican High School of Detroit, topped the list with the largest number of students registered. St. Mary's of Jackson, St. Mary's of Mount Clemens, Annunciation High School, and Our Lady of Mercy High School of Detroit followed closely with large representations.

Other schools with student and faculty representation were Aquinas College, Grand Rapids; Assumption College, Windsor; Nazareth College, Kalamazoo; Mary Manse College, Toledo. High Schools: St. Mary's Academy, Monroe; Sacred Heart, Dearborn; St. Mary's and Shrine High Schools, Royal Oak; St. Frederick's, Pontiac; St. David, St. Benedict, St. Thomas, St. Elizabeth, Visitation, and Boys Catholic Central, all of Detroit.

Faculty members were registered from Marygrove College, St. Francis de Sales, St. Mary's of Redford, Immaculata High, Eastern High, Central High, and St. Josephat High of Detroit; Our Lady of Mount Carmel High, Wyandotte and St. Mary's High, Wayne, Michigan.

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